Joseph B. Seale
Statement of Interest

My impression is that the Task Force is strong on legal, regulatory, and environmental protection issues, all of which represent necessary hurdles to be overcome. What I would hope to offer is help in the technical means to overcome those hurdles and move forward. More strength is needed on the pro-active side of this discussion, in order for Maine to become a leader in the global battle to preserve species and ecosystems from the onslaught of global warming. Recent articles in Maine Biz and the Portland Press Herald have falsely juxtaposed the hazards to a few endangered local species against the "negligible" impact that Maine wind farms can have on global climate. A fair comparison needs to juxtapose global action against global results, with Maine policies viewed as a contributing component of a global movement. If the population of the planet "wakes up" to the rapid increase in damage that will result from global warming, and responds by mitigating that damage, the forests and wildlife in Maine will benefit, along with the rest of the globe. If each state and nation thinks only in terms of local impact of its policies, then a tragedy of the commons will follow. Our state, acting alone, cannot preserve its temperate ecosystems. Wind energy technology must be developed intelligently, in conjunction with measures that promote conservation in many sectors, as part of a global movement. If we want to take strong action, in particular, to preserve our native birds, we should look at a substantial predator population that is currently being sustained artificially on canned cat food and kitty kibble, sheltered in households, and then turned loose to roam the woods and act according to its instincts. After that, and some serious examination of the consequences of large plate glass windows for birds, we finally get down to the level of bird kills by wind turbines, which are to be weighed in relation to a global balance of planetary life, not just in relation to local interests.

The implementation steps for wind farms, including creation of access roads, clearing for power lines, and the like, are probably more of a conservation issue than the subsequent operation of the wind farms. It is with specific recognition in this area that I've turned my inventive skills to development of sodar equipment that can be carried in to remote areas, staked down as a camper would stake down a tent, left for a year or two to gather and transmit wind data using solar energy, and provide a good economic projection for wind energy at that site. Where we go through the disruptions necessary to set up wind turbines, we would do well to know in advance that these turbines will see the winds needed to pay for themselves and offset our burning of imported fossil fuels. I am looking to minimize the disruptions caused by the wind prospecting process, prior to choice of wind farm sites and specific tower placements.

I'm looking toward sodar elements that can be lowered from a helicopter, carried by a pair of workers, installed with minimal disruption of wildlife, and be removed without a trace after a year or two of data acquisition. The alternative is tall anemometer towers, with all the disruptions implied. I have been working much of the time over the last nine months, out of personal resources and unincorporated, to develop an overall engineering approach to this low-impact form of wind measurement from the ground. My partner, Dr. Richard Ely, and I will be progressing toward incorporation and funding of this effort, which promises to be a new Maine business. This effort gives me a personal business motivation to become more acquainted with wind farm prospectors and developers. The flip side is a sense of community service, in support of the local and global effort toward sustainable energy development and conservation.